

Collins-Davis House  
Main Street  
Washington  
Mason County  
Kentucky

HABS No. KY-124

HABS  
KY  
81-WASH,  
3-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

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3-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

COLLINS - DAVIS HOUSE

HABS No. KY-124

Location: Main Street, Washington, Mason County, Kentucky  
Latitude: 38° 37' 00" Longitude: 83°48'32"

Present Owner: Elmer T. Mullikin, Jr.

Present Occupant: Frank Davis, Sr.

Present Use: Residence

Significance: This clapboard structure, built in 1875, is the most exuberant interpretation of Gothic Revival architecture in Washington. The facade is strongly emphasized by three steep gables and a stylized Gothic Revival porch.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1875. Although structures have been located on the property since at least 1804, the present house evidently was erected in 1875. Deed book investigation reveals a drastic drop in property value during the Civil War years, and in 1870 the property was described as a "blacksmith shop and lot," indicating the possible disappearance of that structure's predecessor prior to 1870. When the property was sold in 1874, it was again described as a blacksmith shop and lot, but by 1876 the description had changed to "house and lot". A view of the house in the Mason County Atlas of 1876 (p. 32) shows the building without its present porch, indicating that the house was in an unfinished state when the illustration was drawn.
2. Architect: Not known. The basic designs for cottages of this kind were to be found among the mid 19th century publications of such designers as Downing, Riddell, and the Beechers. The house is apparently the product of local efforts aided by such design prototypes.

3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is a chain of title to the property on which the house is located. Reference is to the Mason County Court Clerk's Office, Maysville, Mason County, Kentucky.

Collins - Davis House in Lot 45:

Deed Book A,	P. 6, --- July 29, 1789 --- William Wood and Arthur Fox to Joel Berry.
Deed Book A,	P. 26, --- September, 1790 --- Joel Berry to Joseph Allen.
Deed Book A,	P. 242, --- October 23, 1792 --- Joseph Allen to George Lewis.
Deed Book A-D,	P. 311, --- December 24, 1797 --- George Lewis to John Brown, "merchant" --- part of in-lot 45.
Deed Book H,	P. 92 --- March 12, 1804 --- John Brown to Samuel Lucas --- house and part of in-lot 45.
Deed Book A-C,	P. 487, --- February 20, 1806 --- Samuel Lucas to S. Smith --- house and part of in-lot 45 --- begins 54' south of NE corner of lot 45, south with Main 43'.
Deed Book 38,	P. 28 --- September 12, 1832 --- S. M. Smith <u>et al</u> to David Bronaugh --- north half, in-lots 45, 46.
Deed Book 71,	P. 188 --- August 27, 1859 --- Frances Bronaugh to Ann F. Henry --- \$800.00 --- Parts of lots 45, 46 --- between lots of William Barclay (formerly E. K. Thompson) on south and Conquest W. Owens on north --- Property of David Bronaugh (dec'd).
Deed Book 71,	P. 577 --- October 25, 1866 --- Ann F. Henry to M. D. Steele --- part of lots 45, 46 --- between lots of Jacob Jones (formerly W.G. Barclay) on the south and M. D. Steel (formerly C. W. Owens) on the north , \$100.00.
Deed Book 74,	P. 224 --- March 8, 1870 --- M. D. Steele to J. B. Morrison --- Blacksmith shop and lot.

Deed Book 77, P. 137 --- March 30, 1874 --- J. B. Morrison  
et al to G. A. and C. R. Collins --- \$500.00  
--- Blacksmith shop and lot.

Deed Book 79, P. 56 --- September 11, 1876 --- G. A. Collins  
to C. R. Collins --- 1/2 interest in "house  
and lot" --- See also Deed Book 89, p. 326.

Deed Book 136, P. 575 --- January 7, 1939 --- W. G. Kenton,  
Master Commissioner to Dan and John Maher ---  
(Reference: Deed Book 143, p. 440) ---  
Property sold on behalf of heirs of Charles R.  
Collins - (tract no. 2)

Deed Book 143, P. 506 --- September 3, 1946 --- Dan Maher  
et al to Frank Davis, Sr., Anne Davis, Frank  
Davis, Jr., and E. T. Mullikin --- tract no.  
2: 68' frontage on Main; begins 33' north of  
corner, Williams and Main.

Deed Book 186, P. 14 --- September 27, 1971 --- Frank Davis,  
Sr. et al to Elmer T. Mullikin, Jr. --- tract  
no. 2.

4. Builder: The house was probably built by C. R. Collins, owner of the property in 1874, who is most likely to be the C. B. (probably C. R., a typographical error). Collins was listed in the Mason County Atlas of 1876 as a "Carpenter, Contractor, and Builder," (p. 37). Unconfirmed records show that Collins may have advertised his house as a showplace for his building talents.
5. Original plans and construction : The oldest view of the house is found on page 32 of the Mason County Atlas of 1876. This drawing shows the present house without its front porch, an indication that the structure was at that time in an unfinished state. The view also shows a one-story wing at the rear, the position of which is confirmed by the plan of the house on the town plat in the Atlas (p. 37, lot 45). Apparently the building has survived the past century unaltered except for the loss of the rear wing.

A mid-western interpretation of Gothic Revival cottage architecture, the house, in its sidelighted entrance and rectangular six-over-six windows, is a Greek Revival core with Gothic embellishments. Viewed from the east, the house is very obviously Gothic Revival, with three steep gables emphasizing verticality and the porch with stylized Tudor arches drawing attention from the Greek Revival doorway. Notably absent is any vestige of Gothic Revival ornamental bargeboards or the

"gingerbread" often associated with post-Civil War architecture. Viewed from any other direction, the house is much less Gothic, with its boxy, squarish mass, six-over-six sash, and horizontal clapboards. This same form of clapboarding is indicated in the 1876 Atlas. The house is a regional concession to a style which flourished a decade earlier on the eastern seaboard.

On the interior, the two south rooms on the first floor are equal in size and traditional in arrangement, with fireplaces sharing a center chimney. The remaining three rooms and stair hall are a concession to the informal planning advocated by such designers as Downing and the Beecher sisters, Catherine and Harriet. These rooms are unequal in size and asymmetrically arranged. Upstairs, the two main rooms on north and south sides have chimneys rising through the center of the room. There is no evidence that these rooms were partitioned. No original building plans or specifications have been located.

6. Alterations and additions: The major alteration of the building was the loss of the one-story rear wing pictured in the Atlas of 1876 (p. 32). The front porch evidently had handrails and balusters, which have since disappeared. Clapboards show evidence of patching, as does the roof. Only in recent years has the structure begun to show signs of deterioration.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The plan of the house, whose front exterior facade is predominantly Gothic Revival, is typically Greek Revival-- the main rooms flanking a central stairhall.
2. Condition of fabric: Fair.

### B Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The rectangular shaped house measures 42'-2" (three-bay front) x 31'-9". It is two stories high.
2. Foundations: An undressed limestone foundation supports the house.
3. Walls: Walls are of plain clapboarding painted white.
4. Structural system, framing: Interior wood framing (undulating in second floor) with vertical posts. The rafters of the roof meet the posts above the second floor. The joists are lapped and pegged.

5. Porches, stoops: The house has a handsome Gothic Revival porch at the front entry on the first floor. It has a flat roof supported by four chamfered columns spaced at equal intervals. Under the roof, between the columns, are inverted V-shaped brackets with decorative pendants. Two pilasters with the same design of the columns provide additional support for the roof.

The door at the right side of the rear (west) elevation is sheltered by a shed-roofed porch with two simple columns. It is approached by a four-step stoop. To the left of this door are two other four-step stoops made of aggregate block with stucco, providing accesses to the interior.

6. Chimneys: Two brick chimneys project from the ridge of the roof; one of simple design is on the north slope and one with a corbel is on the south slope.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: A mortise-and-tenon door with elaborate molding serves as the front door. Sidelights appear on either side of the door, each with three pieces of glass. A transom appears above the door.

Three doors of simple design provide entrances to the rear side. One has two long and narrow pieces of glass set vertically. An additional door provides entry to the roof over the front porch. It is a nine-light door with two horizontal panels below.

- b. Windows and shutters: The first floor front windows are of double-hung six-over-six light sash, as are the windows in the north and south facades. The windows in the two smaller gables at the front are two-over-two double-hung light sash. A pair of shutters appear on the two first floor windows of the front elevation. They are sectioned with two sets of louvres.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The main gable roof of the house is very steep. Three gables (the center one being as high as the main roof, while the two others are lower in height) project out from the front (east) of the roof. The front face of these roofs have decorative finials and pendants, which are not repeated on the rear roofs.

The rear of the main gable is covered with corrugated tin sheeting, while the front of the roof and dormers are covered with mineral surface asphalt shingles. The south third of the main gable is covered with mineral surface asphalt paper.

- b. Cornice: A simple cornice projects out from the wall by more than one foot.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: A small six-foot ceiling basement appears below the northern third of the house. Entry is from the exterior through the recessed stair.
  - b. First Floor: The main entrance is in the east facade which leads to the entry hall from which the staircase rises from the south (left) wall. To the south (left), there is a vacant room and to the north (right) is a bedroom. Beyond the entry hall is another vacant room with access doors: One is to the exterior, one to another vacant room to the south and one to the north, which serves as a kitchen. Simply, there are three rooms in the front of the house and two rooms in the rear. The latter rooms have access doors to the exterior.
  - c. Second Floor: The stairs lead to a landing at the center of the house. To the north and south of this landing appear two similarly shaped rooms. Both are irregular in size due to narrow spaces connecting rooms with windows in dormers. Chimneys rise through the center of each room. A door at the east end of the hall provides access to second floor porch. West of it is a long and narrow storage room, which runs the length of the rear part of the house.
2. Stairways: The stairway in the center of the house is a ornamental quarter turn, open string run with a landing near the top. Elaborate balusters support the four-inch wide molded handrail which runs unbroken from the newel post to the end of the rail at the second floor in the hall.
3. Flooring: Fairly wide hardwood planks exist throughout the house.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster and lath walls are covered in every finished room with decorator wallpaper. Horse hair is visible in the plaster.

5. Doorways and doors: Most doors are mortise and tenon doors with inserted panels and simple moldings. Some less finished doors appear in some places.
6. Trim: Woodwork is very plain throughout, though the front door (both inside and out) is handsome in appearance.
7. Hardware: Original porcelain door knobs appear on most doors.
8. Mechanical equipment: Fireplaces on the first floor are faced with ornamental iron grates. A modern gas heating unit appears in the only bedroom on the first floor.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: This house faces approximately 5° South of East (95°). The house is set 60 feet back from the center of Main Street. Washington's original sidewalk, though obscured, passes along Main Street. One of Washington's original wells sits at the southeast corner of the site with a reconstructed housing.
2. Outbuildings: A cistern with a "gem" pump is situated about 20 feet from the northwest corner of the house. Downspouts from the gutter of the west side of the main gable (tin roof) feed the cistern with rain water.

Prepared by: Ronald J. Burch, Project Historian,  
and Perry Benson, Project Supervisor  
Historic American Buildings Survey  
August 1975

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Early view: A view of the house without its front porch appears on page 32 in An Illustrated Atlas of Mason County, Kentucky, published 1876. See Supplemental Material on page 8.
- B. Bibliography:
  1. Primary and unpublished sources: Deed Books, Mason County Clerk's Office, Maysville, Kentucky.
  2. Secondary and published sources:

An Illustrated Atlas of Mason County, Kentucky, Philadelphia.  
Pennsylvania: Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson, 1876, pp. 32, 27.

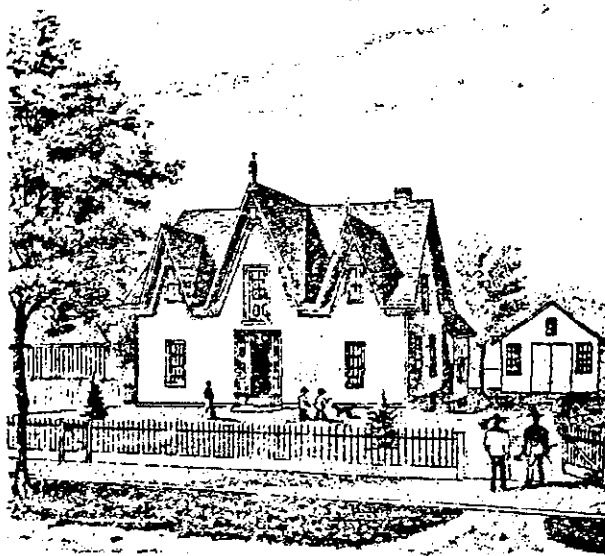


Downing, A. J. The Architecture of Country Houses. New York:  
Dover Publications, Inc., 1969. Reprint of 1850 edition.

Maass, John. The Gingerbread Age. New York: Bramhall House,  
1957.

C. Supplemental Material: See page 9.

This early view is in An Illustrated Atlas of Mason County, Kentucky, page 32, published in 1876 by Lake, Griffing and Stevenson, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



RES. OF C. R. COLLINS, WASHINGTON, MASON CO. KY.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in co-operation with Old Washington, Inc. in the summer of 1975. Under the supervision of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, a documentation of nine structures and one site was produced by Perry Benson (University of Pennsylvania), the project supervisor; Ronald Burch (Cornell University), the project historian; Mark Hall (Pennsylvania State University), Kenneth Payson (Cornell University), William F. Petell (Syracuse University) and Steven Shapiro (University of Maryland), student assistant architects. Susan McCown, a HABS staff historian in the Washington, D.C. office, edited the written data for preparation of transmittal to the Library of Congress.

ADDENDUM TO  
COLLINS-DAVIS HOUSE  
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Kentucky

HABS No. KY-124

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KY,  
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
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Washington, D.C. 20013